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THE NATIONAL PARKS FOR ALL THE PEOPLE

AND

PERHAPS OUR GREATEST NATIONAL PARK

(The Greater Sequoia)

TWO ADDRESSES :: By ENOS MILLS

DELIVERED AT THE NATIONAL PARKS CONFERENCE AT WASHINGTON, D. C., DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF JANUARY, 1917

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THE NATIONAL PARKS FOR ALL THE PEOPLE.

By Enos Mills.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, the Yellowstone was the first national park in the world. There is an inspiring story in connection with the making of this park. Possibly you have heard it. At any rate, in September, 1870, a number of prominent citizens from Helena, Mont., were camping in the Yellowstone wonderland. They had just spent about two weeks in looking over the scenes within. They had gone there for the purpose of doing so, simply because they believed that such a region as they had heard the Yellowstone to be did not exist.

As a matter of fact, it might be well to say right here that the Yellowstone wonderland contained so many peculiar wonders that it was actually discovered and forgotten five times. The original discoverer of the Yellowstone, John Coulter, one of the greatest names in the outdoor world, when he told of the story of the discovery of Yellowstone Park, he was laughed at and ridiculed so much that he vanished and died, as he felt, in disgrace. Yet the Yellowstone wonderland existed. These prominent Montana men had gone, and they had found the Yellowstone, had found it greater than the wildest, strangest stories that had ever been told concerning it. But they were just ready to leave this wonderland. They had seen the marvelous canyon and the white waterfall that went plunging over into it. They had seen the petrified forests, the greatest geological wonder of the world. They had seen those strange, poetic geysers. They had seen all of those things. But this night they were camping near the geysers, and a number of the men were discussing as to how they might obtain control of the Yellowstone wonderland that they might exploit it and make a fortune out of it—a perfectly natural thing for the American business man to think of. But there was one man, a statesman, who sat by the camp fire for a time and said nothing. Finally—and I hope you will tell your children of this man—Cornelius Hodges rose to his feet.

"Boys," he said, "you are on the wrong track. The Government owns this wonderland, and it ought forever to own it. This region ought to become a national park for the benefit and welfare of all mankind."

His idea prevailed. He was so enthusiastic that a number of men in the party caught his enthusiasm. A campaign was waged, and as

a result, on the 1st day of March, 1872, the first national park in the world came into existence. Heretofore the beautiful places, the scenic lands, had been set aside for the favored few, but this is one of the great things concerning a national park or for any park, it is made and it is developed for the general welfare.

In considering any welfare work, a park must ever be considered. But a park, especially a national park, is something utterly separate from welfare work, because the national park belongs to the people themselves. In other words, it is a park of the people, for the people, and by the people. It won't be the same as erecting great libraries and that sort of thing for the benefit of the people. These parks are something that people are caring for for themselves. Why do we want them? I believe you will agree with me that it has become a public function to look after the recreation facilities of the public. There is no other way in which they are likely to be looked after in a correct manner.

Everyone needs to play, and to play out of doors. And outdoor play never fails to help all that is good. If you want to further people's health or their inefficiency, or expand their ideals, give them a chance to meet their fellow people out under the open sky in some magnificent scene.

If park life will promote health and prevent sickness, isn't it far better to urge parks than it is to build so many hospitals? Isn't it better to prevent disease than to cure it?

It is a known fact, as is shown by pioneer people and the children of pioneers, that nature is a marvelous educational stimulus. If this be true, and it certainly is emphatically true, why not give the children of the country the opportunity to enjoy park life, and especially the national parks? In the national parks you will find some of the greatest wonders of the world, wonders not elsewhere to be found. Hence, these parks might be used educationally, and thus we might cut down the list of those things that are hurtful to humanity, and we might thereby reach the conclusion that after all one of the greatest things which the public needs is outdoor recreation. This being true, we certainly need parks, and then more parks.

As the Secretary of the Interior said to you this morning, "The Nation is calling for volunteers to the Army and to the Navy and to do other things." Yet he stated emphatically before you that volunteers to help further the work of creating and developing national parks is one of the greatest needs of this Nation or any nation. It is something, as I have just said, and I repeat, that reaches all people and helps the interests. It is not a question of what they are going to cost. We can not afford to do without parks.

This afternoon is devoted, as I understand, chiefly to the idea of developing parks. A number of Congressmen addressed the audience here this morning, and a majority really appreciate the great possibilities of parks. We ought not to think what they cost, but we must think that we could not afford to do without them. It would not do to try to make the public school pay; it would not do to try to make the public playgrounds pay; well, now, neither would it do to make the national parks or any other park pay. I think we would blunder if we worked along that line.

I would like to say that civilization appears to have reached its highest point at the present moment in the Interstate Park, near New York City. There nearly $13,000,000 have been spent on parks, and that park has been developed with the idea that people want it and need it, and that it is theirs—and there, ladies and gentlemen, there is not a single concession in the Palisades Interstate Park. No individual or company can make a profit out of exploiting the necessary pastimes of their fellowship in the Palisades Interstate Park.

And, Mr. Chairman, I believe you will realize that within a few years the American people will insist that the people must not only own their parks, but they must run them absolutely themselves. Just at present that might be impossible, but we are moving undoubtedly in the right direction.

Well now, I would like, and I believe everyone who is interested in parks would like, to see them developed for all the people; that is to say, the rich, the near rich, and the poor. In the Interstate Park they make special efforts to find the way to have people transported to the park who can not afford to go there themselves. Now, that is doing real service. If you give people an opportunity to rest in a park, they will save doctor's bills, and they will avoid, perhaps, sickness and that sort of thing. Hence, this preventive measure which you find, you might say, in all parks if they are used is one of the best things that can happen to any people. Hence, let us develop the parks.

Last winter in a brief address Mr. Robert B. Marshall, in speaking of the development of parks, said he thought they should be developed for all the people; that is to say, a hotel in there where a poor man could spend a day without paying any more than it actually costs—a low-priced and a popular-priced hotel; and if anyone wanted to go to a national park to spend $100 a day, by all means let us be ready for him. If we do not give him a chance to spend his money in this country, he will spend it in another country; if we do not give him a chance to spend his money in a park, he will spend his money in the saloon. Let us remember that the park is a competitor against all places of evil, and the majority of people will go to good places if they are provided for them.

And Mr. Marshall also said that the buildings should be attractive, and fit harmoniously into the surroundings; or, as he expressed it, they should not scare the scenery!

Before going further I would like briefly to name some of the parks that I find in wandering over the country. Not one individual in a thousand can name more than four national parks. At present there are really at least 16. I wish there were 16 more. At the head of this list I would like to see the Grand Canyon.

But before naming these parks, just a little outdoor experience which I once had: Once in my rambles in the mountains on a rainy day, I took a refuge in a prospector's tent. The storm was breaking, and the prospector and I stood outside of the tent looking down into the canyon, watching the clouds separate and drift away. Lightning had occasionally struck around us. It was a day of thunder showers. And as we stood there, lightning struck a fir tree close to our tent, and with a terrific report smashed the tree to pieces. I was frightened, but to let my companion think that I was not alarmed, I said to him, "Jerry, why doesn't lightning ever strike twice in the same place?" And Jerry replied, "Gosh, it don't need to!"

Ladies and gentlemen, many nations have fallen, but never for having too many parks or too much scenery—not a single one. So let us have at least ample park room, so if nations must pass away, it will not be because they have failed to have outdoor life.

A well-known author, some years ago, wrote a story about an experience in London. He said he was the twenty-second one that had bathed in the same water in the family trough of a poor rural family, but that was not half as bad as breathing the same air every day. Therefore, we need outdoor breathing places. These parks afford outdoor breathing places.

As to parks, I briefly touched on the Yellowstone. Then there is the Glacier National Park, one of the largest ones. Perhaps, the greatest area of mountain lakes in the country, about 250 of them, are in this park, and above them rise precipitous high mountains. I will not dwell on its wonders.

Out near Seattle is Mount Rainier National Park, often called the noblest mountain in the West, should be mentioned in this connection. Mount Rainier is a sleeping volcano. It has a heart of fire, but on the outside of it 50 square miles of glacial ice on the top, and on the lower slope a splendid forest, and between these what happens? The most luxurious and grandest wild flower garden in the world.

In Oregon they have the Crater Lake National Park, the crater of an old volcano, about 6 miles in diameter, partly filled with water, which, when seen from the top, appears marvelously strangely blue.

California leads in the number of national parks and it ought to have others. Surely the greater Sequoia National Park ought to be created. In California you have the Lassen Volcanic National Park, the Gen. Grant, the Yosemite, and the Sequoia. And the Sequoia has the grandest and greatest forest in the world. In that forest are trees that are 2,000 years old, many of them more than 20 feet in diameter, trees old in story, many times the age of the oldest nation on earth. The smaller parks I shall not trouble to name. In Colorado there are a couple of parks well worth seeing. In the southwestern part of the State on which rises about 2,000 feet above the surrounding country are the ruins of a prehistoric Indian civilization. There were houses and temples upon the mesa and there were wonderful cliff houses of more than 200 rooms, built of polished stone. No one knows where those people came from, why they lived there, or what had become of them. But there they evidently lived through many centuries and surely they must have been civilized people. The ruins they left behind, at any rate, are suggestive and interesting and even inspiring. And in the Rocky Mountain National Park, in Colorado, you will find the rocks at their best, dotted here and there with lakes and draped with verdant forests.

There are other parks which I have already suggested which I shall not even name to-day; but one of the newer ones, off in the Hawaiian Islands, is another wonderland. So in our national parks we have a great variety of wonderland. In some of them there are scenes of the highest type which you can not find elsewhere in the world.

I believe that the development of national parks is about the only advertising that they need. So I think the keynote of the present time should be to get our national parks ready to be seen. People are going to them just as rapidly as people find that they can get accommodations. At the Interstate Park in New York, in speaking of the machinery for handling the crowds, the gentleman who has charge of it the other day said: "The people are coming to that park more rapidly than we can get ready for them." So back of and accompanying all national-park legislation we should bear in mind that people will go to these places if we get them ready for the travelers.

Mr. Charles Sheldon, who has had years of experience in the outdoors, is urging forward the making of a national park in Alaska of Mount McKinley and part of the surrounding region. This is a most worthy project, for the simple reason that one of the great things that it will now accomplish will be the protection of the game. Alaska is being settled; a railroad is close to this park; and in two or three short years the greatest mountain sheep range in the

world is likely to be depleted of its sheep unless this is made a park. So I would like to commit that proposition.

The Secretary this morning referred to the fact that volunteers are needed in the national park work. I am not going to commend the work of anyone who has labored in the last few years, but I do want to refer to the work of three men who have rendered national parks splendid service. Mr. Will G. Steel, who now has the dignified title of judge, spent seventeen years, ladies and gentlemen, in working to procure for you and me and future generations the Crater Lake National Park. Seventeen years; think of the man so devoted to a cause that he will give the best years of his life and all the money that he could earn and borrow to create a national park. But he did. And then there still lives in southern California Mr. Stuart, and it was chiefly through the efforts of this one man that we have to-day the Sequoia National Park. But in thinking over the names of those who have been helpful to national parks, and honoring as I do Mr. Cornelius Hedges, who really proposed the first national park, a greater work than that done by all was done by that magnificent man, John Muir.

I really feel that John Muir did more for the human race during the century that just passed in good that will be reaped in the century in which we are now living than any other individual. He wrote the poem of the outdoors; he pointed out its beauties; and the name of John Muir will be forever associated with our national parks, with the great glaciers, with the big trees, with sunlight and shadow, with the canyons, with the wildflower gardens, and with every song that nature sings in the wild gardens of the world. To-day I am most thankful, among all the heroes in American history, or of the world, to John Muir. I hope and believe that after the names of all the other heroes of nature are forgotten that John Muir's name will live. He was a man who did not use or carry a cane.

But now, ladies and gentlemen, there are still other places which I feel should be parks, and for fear some people misunderstood me, let me say right here that I am not a Government official, I am not speaking for Government officials, I am not speaking for any organization. I simply represent my own ideas, and in saying what is about to follow, let me say that I simply believe that they represent the general ideas of the people of the United States who have thought concerning national parks, and are—yes, as one of the Congressmen stated this morning, I believe it would be a wise thing for the people of the United States at once to make all of the national parks—to have scenery fit to go into a national park. All this would include places that have already passed into private hands. These

scenic places will never get any cheaper or more beautiful than they are to-day. Hence, if they are to be parks, let us urge their creation now. That would be a noble kind of preparedness.

The Government among its 700,000,000 acres of land has a number of scenic areas that might well be made national parks. You know, as well as I do, that much of the attractive quality of national parks or of any scenery is perishable—birds, flowers, etc. Hence, such regions should be at once created, not to-morrow, not next year, but why not do it now? The Government has to maintain its own scenic areas whether they are parks or not; so why not make the subject larger so it will appeal to all the people of the country? Show them what an unrivaled inheritance they have by at once designating the territory that is to become national parks.

There is an interesting Indian legend which substantially is this, that in the closing acts of creation the woman was called into existence and told to do her part. She at once covered the earth with the beautiful, with the flowers, the birds, and the trees. Now, that's the kind of a woman to have at the creation of a world, and that's the kind of women and men we need to-day, who will perpetuate some of its primal beauty. It is being done in national parks; and so the Indians, in their realistic poetic way, saw years ago what Victor Hugo so well stated; that is, that the beautiful is as useful as the useful. If you will stop for a moment and recall this fact that sometime ago the Declaration of Independence was written—now, did you ever stop to think it was written by people who were intimately in contact with nature; that the Declaration of Independence, after all, was but the spell of the wilderness; and that hundreds upon hundreds of years ago we met on the mountains of Switzerland at the founding of Switzerland, and said amid magnificent scenes: "We will stand each for all and all for each," and then still further some time ago Australia was colonized by convicts who were relegated there by people who were worse than convicts. But Mother Nature took charge of them all; they were among primal scenes, and in a short time those people have become real human beings, and to-day the Australian men and women are second to none in the world. Nature did her part there.

South America is still mostly a primeval wilderness. I look at the great women she is beginning to produce, and she is only just beginning. It all but emphasizes what I said in the beginning of the address that we need parks for their mental stimulus, for their inspiration. We need them for education; we need them that we may have greater men and women.

Scenery is the most profitable resource that we have. Switzerland has grown rich by exploiting its scenery. The year before the

breaking out of the war in Europe 500,000 Americans were abroad. They spent on an average of $1,000 a piece, which means they took out of the country $50,000,000. They spent most of this for scenery, and they spent it chiefly because the American scenery was not ready for the traveler. So, if we want Americans to see America, we simply have to think of the development of our parks and get ready for the travelers.

So, for practical business reasons, we may say develop the parks because they will pay, and we can not get along without them. Parks pay dividends in humanity. Within the magic scenes of national and other parks lies the hope of the world.

PERHAPS OUR GREATEST NATIONAL PARK.

By Enos Mills.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, it is a profound pleasure to say a few words, and I shall speak but briefly concerning the Greater Sequoia Park, perhaps our greatest national park. The speakers who have preceded me have given you some idea of it. Those who follow me will give you still other ideas of it. So I shall try to be brief. When it comes to a variety of scenes in one locality, scenes which embrace, you might say, almost every class of outdoor beauty, you will find them in the region proposed for the Greater Sequoia National Park.

Three years ago, in addressing an audience concerning national parks, I had been describing all the places that are national parks, and some that I thought should be, some one in the audience asked me this unusual question: "Mr. Mills, if you were sentenced to serve the rest of your life in one of the national parks, which one would you select?" Without the slightest hesitation I said, "The Sequoia National Park." Of course, the supreme attractions in that park are the big trees. Let us notice this park region at the present time. The Sequoia National Park embraces about 265 square miles. The proposed park would include an area of 1,600 square miles; the region included would be one which you would classify as a scenic one. You have been hearing a great deal about land classification. Land has been classified as agricultural, forest, mineral, or high land, and all that sort of thing; but from now on, ladies and gentlemen, it is time to make a higher classification—that is, a scenic classification of land—because from scenery we get the greatest benefits to mankind; and, after all, scenic land has higher value if used for the benefit of men, women, and children than any other land known.

This region of 1,600 square miles lies at the southern end of the Sierras, approximately 100 miles north of Los Angeles. All of you have heard of the Death Valley. In a straight line about 70 miles from the Death Valley is Mount Whitney. It is an interesting fact that the lowest point in the United States should be within 70 miles of the highest point; that the lowest point, the Death Valley, which is not a very poetical looking place, did not look to me, when I was there as a young man, as though it was a good place in which to grow up with the country. At any rate, move just a short distance westward from Death Valley and you get a very radical change, not so

much of latitude as differences. It seemed to when I first visited the Sequoia Park region that all of the great wonders of the world had been piled in that locality. Incidentally, I may say that as a boy, wandering in the wilds because I enjoyed it, one September evening, I found myself in the Giant Forest in the Sequoia National Park. This was just about at the time it was made a national park, in 1890, and although I have stood in many wonderful places, although I have looked upon the high central peaks in Alaska as they rise above the white clouds, although I have stood by that brilliantly colored canyon in the Yellowstone and looked upon the wonderful scenes in Mount Rainier, yet never, any place, have I stood where I felt so a part of the Infinite as I felt when I stood in the Giant Forest in the Sequoia National Park.

In this park, as I have already said, was a great range of attractions. First of all there is the high peak, Mount Whitney, 14,501 feet high. Now there are in the United States more than 100 peaks that are above 14,000 feet, but only one that rises above 14,500. There you have a high peak. Then in this same region you have the Kings and Kern Canyons, unrivaled in the world as canyons of their kind. And then, best of all, are these big trees.

A tree is the best friend that a man has. The human race, all the way from cave to college, has been benefited by the trees in the United States, but in this park the trees attain their highest developments. A tree lives longer and grows larger than any other living thing. In this park as it now stands, there are about 1,000,000 big trees. Some of them are of simply stupendous size. This park, if extended, will of course include the General Grant National Park, in which stands the largest tree in the world, the General Sherman, a tree old certainly, known in story, probably 6,000 years of age. I wonder if the boys and girls in the room at the present time have ever stopped to think that the tree has to stand in one place all of its life, although it may live hundreds and thousands of years. A little tree may start to grow; it grows a few inches, then it grows a few inches more; then a few feet more. But in the spring and summer and winter there it stands in one place. In its top the birds nest and sing; around it animals live and play. As a matter of fact a forest springs up around the tree. The tree watches the ever-changing struggle for existence. Our animals fight and frolic, live and love. It is one of the strangest places in all the world. For what a long, long time this splendid big tree, the General Sherman, has witnessed through the centuries, and let us hope it will still witness there for centuries yet to come.

There are the higher mountains, and streams and canyons, and then there are many beautiful lakes in this region. The ice king, who chiseled California on such a magnificent scale, did some of his

best and grandest work. He chiseled the canyon, the peaks, the lakes, and gave to this park region many of its flowing lines and beauty. Within this proposed park you will find as interesting a glacier record as you will find any place on earth. As the great John Muir has pointed out, the Sequoia forests are growing in those places which were first laid bare by the ice at the close of the great ice period. Here in many ways you will find an ever-interesting story of nature in this Sequoia Park.

In the streams you will find fish. Let us remember that in this region the golden trout originated. Within this park there are the mountain sheep, there are bear and deer. There are many kinds of birds, and then, too, there is an exceeding wealth and variety of wild flowers, and then over all, and ever with it is a climate equal to any in the world.

This region, with its varied beauty and size, is, I believe, the greatest in all the world. Why it would be a disgrace to civilization, ladies and gentlemen, if we let it be destroyed. We ought to save it for our better selves and our greater Nation, and we shall save it.

There used to be a race of people in Africa called the Hottentots. They have been forgotten. The Hottentots had a strange idea. They considered that a woman was not beautiful until she had both cheeks scarred and her front teeth knocked out! I sometimes think that pioneer people—not all of them—are so forgetful of the beauty of their country that they consider it is not beautiful until it is all scarred and its front teeth knocked out. Many years ago that genius, Horace Greeley, went West, and he almost typified the typical pioneer. When he arrived by one of those big trees it did not seem to appeal to his imagination at all. As a matter of fact, too often people do not have imagination. But at any rate Horace Greeley, instead of thinking of the wonders it might look upon and had looked upon, simply walked up to it, pulled out a pencil and paper and figured how much lumber could be obtained from it.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have passed too many milestones to figure how many feet of lumber may be obtained from one of these big trees. We had just as well think of how many paving stones could be obtained by tearing down the Congressional Library.

So let us hope and believe from now on we will appreciate the value of scenery and its benefit to mankind, and that appreciating it we shall preserve it.

Now, briefly to restate the points that I have tried to make: The region enlarged would include scenery land; that would be its best classification. Used scenically, it will give it a very high economic value, and still higher values which you can not measure by gold. Within this region are extensive areas of such lands. They will be lost to the public, I fear, if the region is not made a national park,

because California may sell or lease this land to private individuals and thus cut the park all up, if the making of the national park is delayed.

So this in turn urges us forward in making this region a park. Is there any reasonable objection to making this a national park? Absolutely none that I know of. So if you are in favor of it I hope you will tell your children about the Sequoia National Park region. I hope you will tell your neighbors: I hope you will tell everyone that one of the great duties of everyone, and it ought to be a pleasure, is to help bring about the creation of the greater Sequoia National Park, or, to use the words of John Muir, "national parks should give glory to the country, and our national parks should make our country the glory of the world." I thank you.

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